

MEMORANDUM OF CONVERSATION

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EXTRA
(F) Soc 14-36

SUBJECT: The Detention of Alfredo Bravo

PARTICIPANTS: Mrs. Martado Bravo, wife of Alfredo Bravo
F. A. Harris, Political Officer, American
Embassy, Buenos Aires

DATE: February 21, 1978

PLACE: U. S. Embassy

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Mrs. Bravo met with Minister of Interior General Harguindeguy on January 23, regarding the detention of her husband, Teacher's Union leader and Permanent Assembly for Human Rights President, Alfredo Bravo. Mrs. Bravo quoted Harguindeguy as saying flatly that Mr. Bravo was not a subversive and had no terrorist connections. Harguindeguy stated that he and President Videla had hoped that Bravo's name could have appeared on the Christmas list of persons removed from the Poder Ejecutivo Nacional (PEN). However, they did not realize the opposition within the Armed Forces to Mr. Bravo's release.

The Minister emphasized that Mrs. Bravo should not forget that her husband had been kidnapped and added if he were set free he might be killed. Mrs. Bravo inquired, who would do such a thing. The Minister replied the same "locos" who kidnapped him originally -- the First Corps. The Minister went on and said that although Mr. Bravo's detention was a sad event, he and Mrs. Bravo are able to talk about a person who is alive. In the case of Hidalgo Sola, Oscar Smith and Pondal, the Ministry of Interior has to receive people asking about their whereabouts with a "face of shame". The Minister then mentioned the French nuns and said the case was a "discredit" to the government but "we" couldn't do anything about it.

The General emphasized that although Mr. Bravo's present situation was painful, it was better for everyone if Mrs. Bravo and her sons continue to visit Mr. Bravo each Thursday at La Plata prison. The Minister referred to the domestic and international concern over professor Bravo's detention. He pointed out two large folders of petitions on his desk and said that the Bravo case had caused more reaction than any other detained person in Argentina. He noted that this intense interest placed the government in a difficult position--if they released Mr. Bravo and something happened to him, public opinion both here and abroad would "fall on us".

Mrs. Bravo replied that she was presented with a terrible conundrum. The Minister agreed and said that although the right of option was for "undesirables" and Mr. Bravo was not an "undesirable", he should consider

ARGENTINA PROJECT (S200000044)

U.S. DEPT. OF STATE, A/RPS/IPS

Margaret P. Grafeld, Director

(☒) Release () Excise () Deny

Exemption(s):

Declassify: () In Part (☒) In Full

() Classify as () Extend as () Downgrade to

Date Declassify on Reason

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asking for the right of option to leave the country. The Minister emphasized the enormous political cost to the government of Argentina for the continued detention of Mr. Bravo. He asked her to relay his concerns and this possible solution to Mr. Bravo and send a reply back to him.

Mrs. Bravo met with her husband at La Plata prison on January 26. After a full discussion of the Minister of Interior's words, they concluded that the government had made a firm decision that Mr. Bravo should be forced to leave the country through the right of option procedure. Mr. Bravo asked his wife to thank the Minister of Interior, for the interest in his security, but that he would wait a bit longer. Mrs. Bravo confidentially mentioned that Mr. Bravo planned to wait until March or April before making a firm decision on applying for the right of option.

On January 30, Mrs. Bravo met with Minister of the Interior Undersecretary Col. Ruiz Palacios and conveyed her husband's message. Col. Ruiz Palacios offered to expedite the processing of Bravo's right of option petition. (Note: Bravo may have a claim to Spanish citizenship through his grandfather.) Palacios urged Mrs. Bravo and her sons to convince Mr. Bravo that the best and the only immediate solution was for him to leave the country.

Ruiz

Col./Palacios reminded her that Minister Harguindeguy had had a very hard fight with B.A. Army Commander Suarez Mason to free Mr. Bravo from illegal detention of the First Corps and to convert him to PEN status.

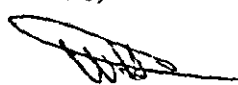
Future Plans -----

Mrs. Bravo is sure that Suarez Mason is the major problem preventing her husband being placed at liberty. She has not been able to see any military official in the First Corps area. Mrs. Bravo said that a committee for the freeing of Alfredo Bravo had been formed as a pressure group in Buenos Aires. In addition the Permanent Assembly was planning to publish a folder on the Bravo detention to try to gain more public interest in his illegal detention.

Mrs. Bravo thanked the Embassy for the U.S. government's and AFL-CIO's continuing interest in her husband's case. She said that there was no specific action that she needed to request at this moment, but wanted to keep the Embassy fully appraised of her husband's situation.

Clearance: A. G. Freeman - LABATT (in draft)

W. H. Hallman - POL



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